

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 OMB-01 EB-07
AID-05 IGA-02 TRSE-00 /059 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/AFN:STESCUDERO:PAW

APPROVED BY NEA:ALATHERTON

P:PEOAKLEY

S/S:MR. SEBASTIAN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TUNIS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 300674

E.O11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EAID, ECIN, TS, US

SUBJECT: HABIB-HEDDA MEETING OF DECEMBER 8, 1976

1. UNDER SECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS HABIB AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON MET BRIEFLY WITH TUNISIAN AMBASSADOR HEDDA ON DECEMBER 8. CONVERSATION SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS:

2. FOLLOWING WARM STATEMENT OF APPRECIATION FOR AMERICAN AID TO TUNISIA SINCE ITS INDEPENDENCE AND BRIEF MENTION OF TUNISIAN DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS, HEDDA NOTED THAT COMBINED ECONOMIC AND MILITARY REQUIREMENTS FACING TUNISIA STILL GREATER THAN RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO GOT. HE SUGGESTED, THEREFORE, THAT US CONSIDER WHAT ADDITIONAL LEVEL OF ASSISTANCE IT MIGHT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE AND REQUESTED THIS PROCESS TAKE PLACE THROUGH MECHANISM OF JOINT COMMISSION MEETING TO BE PRECEDED BY UNDEFINED US-TUNISIAN POLITICAL MEETING. HEDDA PURSUED OCTOBER REQUEST OF TUNISIAN PLANNING MINISTER ZAAOUNI TO SCHEDULE NEXT JOINT COMMISSION MEETING IN FIRST MONTHS OF 1977 AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT MEETING WOULD HELP TO IDENTIFY FORMS OF LONG-TERM US AID
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TO TUNISIA WHICH COULD BE ANNOUNCED PRIOR TO MAY 1977

GATHERING OF CONSULTATIVE ASSISTANCE GROUP FOR TUNISIA.

3. MR. HABIB REPLIED HE UNABLE TO MAKE COMMITMENTS OF THIS SORT DURING TRANSITION PERIOD AND FEELS THAT FOR THE PRESENT JOINT COMMISSION MATTERS SHOULD BE LEFT AS THEY WERE FOLLOWING OCTOBER, 1976 COMMISSION MEETING IN WASHINGTON. HOWEVER, HE WENT ON TO ASSURE HEDDA OF BIPARTISAN NATURE OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY AND PLACED EMPHASIS ON CONTINUITY WHICH SEEMS LIKELY TO CHARACTERIZE NEW ADMINISTRATION IN ITS RELATIONS WITH TUNISIA. MR. HABIB ALSO ASSURED HEDDA THAT NEW ADMINISTRATION TEAM WOULD BE FULLY BRIEFED ON TUNISIAN DESIRES AND SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT TUNISIA WOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN.

4. AMBASSADOR HEDDA ALSO NOTED THAT HE WILL BE VISITING TUNISIA AT END OF NEXT WEEK AND THAT, ACCORDING PHONE CONVERSATION WITH NOUIRA, PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA RETURNING TO TUNIS AT END OF DECEMBER.
ROBINSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, FOREIGN RELATIONS, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE300674
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: STESCUDERO:PAW
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760456-1200
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761253/aaaabtkf.tel
Line Count: 80
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 JUL 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <25 OCT 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HABIB-HEDDA MEETING OF DECEMBER 8, 1976
TAGS: EAID, ECIN, TS, US
To: TUNIS
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006